24th Congress, 1st Session.

[Doc. No. 249.]

Ho. of Reps. War Dept.

PROTECTION OF WESTERN FRONTIER.

[To accompany bill H. R. No 610.]

May 6, 1836.

Laid before the House by the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, and ordered to be printed.

War Department,
May 4, 1836.

Sir: In January last orders were given to Major General Gaines, to take measures for the defence of the western frontier of Louisiana. Events which were then passing in Texas led to the belief that a state of things might arise requiring the interposition of the Government to protect the inhabitants of that portion of the United States from the calamities of war.

There were placed subject to General Gaines's orders three regiments of infantry, and seven companies of dragoons, and he was instructed to prevent by force, if necessary, any armed parties from crossing the boundary line into the territory of the United States. He was also informed that the 33d article of the treaty with Mexico imposes upon both of the contracting parties the duty of preventing all hostile incursions on the part of the Indians into the possessions of the other. And he was directed to take the necessary measures for fulfilling this obligation on the part of the United States. He was also instructed, if called upon by the civil authority for any aid towards enforcing the laws having relation to the neutral duties of the United States, to render such assistance as the laws prescribe. And he was referred to the district attorneys of the two districts of Louisiana for their opinion upon such points of law connected with his duty as might arise. He was also particularly advised that it was the duty of the United States to remain entirely neutral, and to cause their neutrality to be respected.

By information recently received from General Gaines, it appears that he considers it necessary that his force should be increased, with a view to afford proper protection to the frontiers; he has therefore called upon the Governors of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee for a brigade, and upon the Governor of Alabama for a battalion of militia, the whole, or as many of them as practicable, to be mounted. He reports that the Mexican forces are rapidly approaching the border, and he anticipates that as soon as they have reached the vicinity of the Indians, that these will join in the contest, and that the Indian force will respect no boundary line. And the operations in Texas, as described by General Gaines, cannot fail to operate powerfully upon the cruel disposition and predatory habits of the Indians.

I have therefore the honor to suggest to the Committee of Ways and Means the propriety of an appropriation of one million of dollars, "to de-

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fray the expenses attending the defence of the western frontier of the United States, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of War, conformably to the provision of the act of April 5, 1832, making appropriations for the support of the army."

I send for the information of the committee, a letter from the Quartermaster General.

Very respectfully,
Your most obedient servant,
LEWIS CASS.

Hon. C. C. CAMBRELENG,
Ch. Com. Ways and Means,
House of Representatives.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
May 3, 1836.

SIR: The operations on the frontiers of Texas will require large appropriations. I have a requisition on my table for one hundred thousand dollars for that service, and have not a dollar to meet it. I have received a letter from the Assistant Quartermaster at Natchitoches, reporting that he had found great difficulty in obtaining land transportation for five companies; the wagons and horses, as well as mules for packing, must be taken from Ohio, Kentucky, or Tennessee. Should the operations be continued through the season on the scale indicated by General Gaines's requisitions, a million of dollars will probably be required for the service of this department alone.

I have the honor to be,
Sir, your obedient servant,
T. S. JESUP,
Quartm. General.

Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
May 5, 1836.

SIR: In consequence of the intimation contained in your note of this date, I beg leave to observe, that the request for an appropriation of $1,000,000, for the protection of the frontier, in my letter of yesterday, was submitted to, and approved by, the President.

Very respectfully,
Your most obedient servant,
LEWIS CASS.

Hon. C. C. CAMBRELENG,
Chm. Com. Ways and Means,
House of Reps.